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NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

1 June 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Operational Aspects of NRO

REFERENCES : (a) Copy of memo dated 15 April 1963 from DNRO for the Deputy Secretary of Defense [redacted] with attachment [redacted] Copy 3).

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(b) Memo for Deputy Director, NRO, from DNRO, Subj: "NRO Aircraft Operations," dated 22 April 1963 - [redacted] Copy 1).

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(c) Copy of Memo for DNRO from DD/R dated 29 April 1963, Subj: "NRO Aircraft Operations." [redacted] Copy 4).

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(d) Draft memo for Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff and DNRO, Subj: "Operational Aspects of the NRO," no date.

1. On April 15, 1963, I was forwarded a copy of a memorandum to Mr. Gilpatric from the DNRO (ref. (a)), which proposed the assignment of responsibility for control of all NRO aircraft operations to the JRC who would carry out this duty and report to the DNRO. After I had objected to not being consulted on the preparation of this paper, which vitally affected CIA, the DNRO, by reference (b), forwarded me an amplification which specifically stated that the arrangement would have no effect on the aircraft operations responsibilities presently carried out by

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radio via [redacted]
control system

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Director, Program or the functions of CIA's Operations' Center. On 29 April, I commented back to the DNRO, reference (c), that, while the amplification clarified and explained the position of CIA in this organization, I did not believe that the proposed organization was sound and recommended a different approach. During the past month, the proposed NRO paper has been reviewed by the JCS who concurred in the JRC taking on the added functions and reporting therefore to the DNRO. They did object to some of the other parts of the paper and specifically recommended that R&D responsibility in these areas be assigned to the military services. A copy of the JCS memorandum, however, is not available to this Agency. In the last few days, we have received for comment a draft letter to the Chairman, JCS, and DNRO as reference (d), which would formally establish the JRC as the Air Operations Center for the NRO.

2. In discussing this last paper with Dr. Fubini, who has the action in the Department of Defense, it is claimed that there is no intention to change in any way the present responsibilities of CIA and they refer to the escape clause in para. a. of attachment 2. It is their understanding that the CIA projects will be specifically assigned otherwise and therefore not associated with the JRC. This escape clause would appear to me to be a very thin reed upon which to base the maintenance of CIA activities in the air operations field. At the very least, I believe that as a corollary to the present paper there should be another paper to CIA specifically assigning to it these duties for projects for which it is presently responsible, i. e., IDEALIST, OXCART, and TAGBOARD. Basically, I believe, however, that even with these exemptions that the new set up will be a major step toward the present program within the Department of Defense for eroding away CIA's responsibilities in the reconnaissance field.

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3. Furthermore, as stated by me in my previous letter, reference (c), I do not believe that the proposed organization is sound regardless of CIA's situation. Basically, what it does is to establish the JRC in the position of reporting to two different organizations, i. e., the JCS for peripheral activities and for support to other activities and to the DNRO for overflights. This is bound to lead to confusion, which is most unsatisfactory in an arrangement where operational decisions must be made rapidly and authorities must be very clearly defined. In actual practice, I believe what will happen is that the JRC will continue to work for the JCS paying a minimum amount of lip service to the DNRO and that the final result of the entire reorganization will be to put the JCS in control of all reconnaissance operations. If this is what you want, then I believe this should be done directly rather than by this confused organizational procedure.

4. I much prefer the approach that the JCS, with the JRC as their working entity, would be responsible to the DNRO for those overflights which are conducted under JRC auspices, i. e., presently BRASS KNOB In this organization, the Chairman, JRC, could be the Director of NRO Program "E" in much the same way as I am Director of NRO Program for those projects which have been assigned responsibility to CIA. This proposed set-up would provide a minimum of dislocation of the present operational procedures which, on the whole, have worked out quite satisfactorily, while, at the same time, would provide the DNRO with a means of control and coordinating these activities.

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HERBERT SCOVILLE, Jr.
Deputy Director
(Research)

Attachments:

1. Refs. as listed above
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